

**EARLY HELLENISTIC  
PORTRAITURE**

IMAGE, STYLE, CONTEXT

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## 7

FASHION AND MEANING  
 BEARDLESS PORTRAITS OF ARTISTS  
 AND LITERATI IN THE EARLY  
 HELLENISTIC PERIOD

IN 1918, FRANZ STUDNICZKA SUMMARIZED HIS research on the portrait of Menander.<sup>1</sup> Up until then, the head of an elderly man that Studniczka identified convincingly as a representation of the Greek comic poet had often been described as a Republican-period Roman portrait (Fig. 76). Indeed, for some time after Studniczka's publication, there remained scholars who believed that the portrait represented Virgil.<sup>2</sup> This mistake was based primarily on the general classification of ancient portraits into "bearded Greeks" and "beardless Romans," even though scholars had long known of important exceptions – such as Alexander the Great and the Diadochoi – exceptions that should have been a warning against such simplifications. Academic prejudice is difficult to overcome. Much more recently, when Klaus Fittschen in 1992 reconstructed the original head of the portrait statue of Poseidippos in the Vatican, history repeated itself.<sup>3</sup> Only a few years previous, the head Fittschen was able to identify as a portrait of the third-century comic poet (Fig. 77) had been described as the portrait of a Roman of the Republican period.<sup>4</sup> This evaluation, like the earlier one, had been based on characteristics of age and the portrait's beardlessness.

These two cases nicely illustrate the uncertainties inherent in dating beardless portraits. Indeed, had we not been able to identify these two key examples as Menander and Poseidippos, we would have had great difficulty deciding whether they belonged to the early Hellenistic or the late Republican periods. Is it true that portraits made over a period of more than a hundred and fifty years are so similar that we possess no stylistic criteria for dating? Certainly not. Still, the differences are difficult to describe. Specialists often remark that early Hellenistic heads have a "greater three-dimensional presence" or that, in contrast to late Hellenistic heads, they are "noch ganz von einer plastischen Gestaltungsweise geprägt."<sup>5</sup> If this is all we have to go on, the confusion over beardless portraits is easy to understand.

This brings us to the problems addressed in this article. At first I would like to illustrate – with specific, concrete examples – exactly what is meant when we say "greater three-dimensional presence." These examples, I hope, can help establish some preliminary criteria for distinguishing between early Hellenistic and Roman-period unnamed, beardless portraits. I then investigate the interesting coincidence that it is two new comedy *playwrights* that we are able to identify



76. Bust of Menander. Venice, Seminario Patriarcale. Photo: Singer, DAI Rome, negs. 68.5157–8.

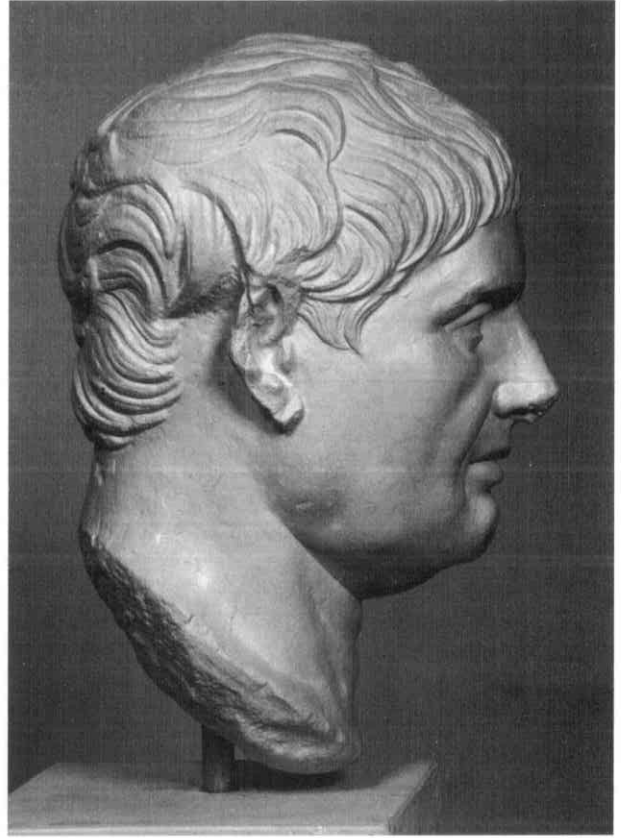
among the early beardless portraits. Here I consider whether Menander and Poseidippos are representatives of a simple change in fashion or if it is possible that their beardlessness may have had a particular meaning.

First of all, let us look at the formal characteristics of the beardless portraits from the early Hellenistic period. At first glance, the portraits of Menander and Poseidippos appear to be very different and individualized. In fact, however, they actually show a series of interesting agreements that evidence a consistent procedure for the design of the human head in early Hellenistic portrait sculpture. If we compare the two, the first thing we notice is the similar design of the eyes: They lie deep in the sockets and are clearly set apart from both the brow ridges and from the cheeks; a hard edge separates the eyes from the cheeks, and a deep incision separates the eyes from the brow ridges. The arcs of the eyebrows extend to the sides of the head. The eye area thus forms an emphasized horizontal axis of the face. This horizontal axis is continued by the clear clefts between the prominent cheekbone and the temples. On the portrait of Poseidippos there are clear dents at these points even though the face is fuller than that of Menander.

The details of the hair are also similar. It is not so much the similar hair length that is important here but rather the manner in which the individual strands are animated. In the case of both Menander and Poseidippos, the locks are ar-

ranged in very imaginative patterns. Most are not twisted into simple crescent shapes but instead are represented like living tongues of flame. In some places, especially at the sides of the heads, they form striking ornaments. On the head of Menander, for example, there is a claw-formed curl above and behind the right ear. From the middle of this curl springs a long, twisted lock that leads to the temple. Above and below this claw motif more curls follow the same direction. As a whole, this area is reminiscent of a palmette, where the tips of the leaves are bent inward. An ornament made of strands of hair arranged like a fan can be seen in the same position on the head of Poseidippos. The general direction of the hair is also the same on both heads. In several cascades of curls, the hair is drawn almost horizontally from the back of the head to the face. This arrangement gives particular emphasis to the considerable three-dimensional extension of the heads. This applies to both front and profile views. A glance at the faces is enough to gauge the curvature of the head by means of the curls that start at the back of the head and twist around to the temples.

A similar design can be found on other, bearded, heads from the early Hellenistic period. The best example is the portrait of Demosthenes from the year 280/79 B.C.E. (Fig. 78; and see Figs. 35–37).<sup>6</sup> Although the hair of the Attic orator is considerably shorter than that of the playwrights, the arrangement and treatment of the curls are the same. In the



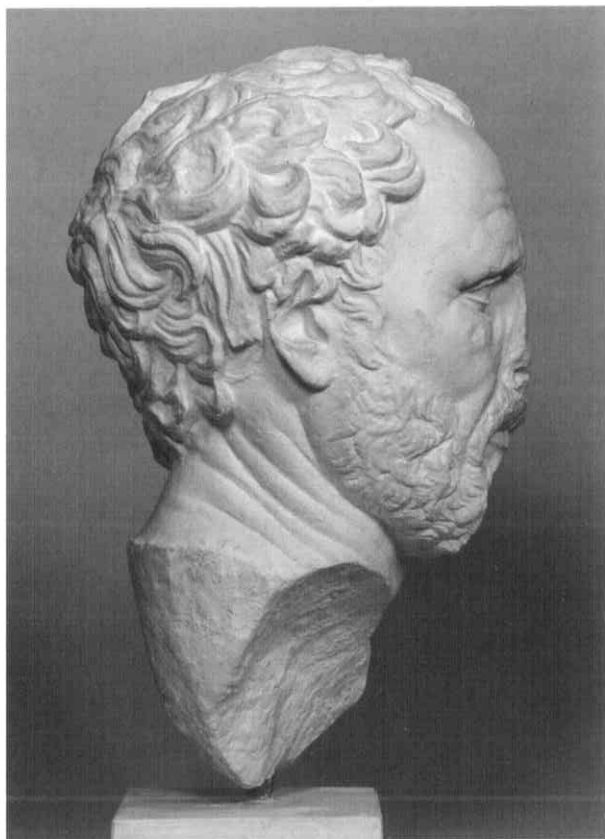
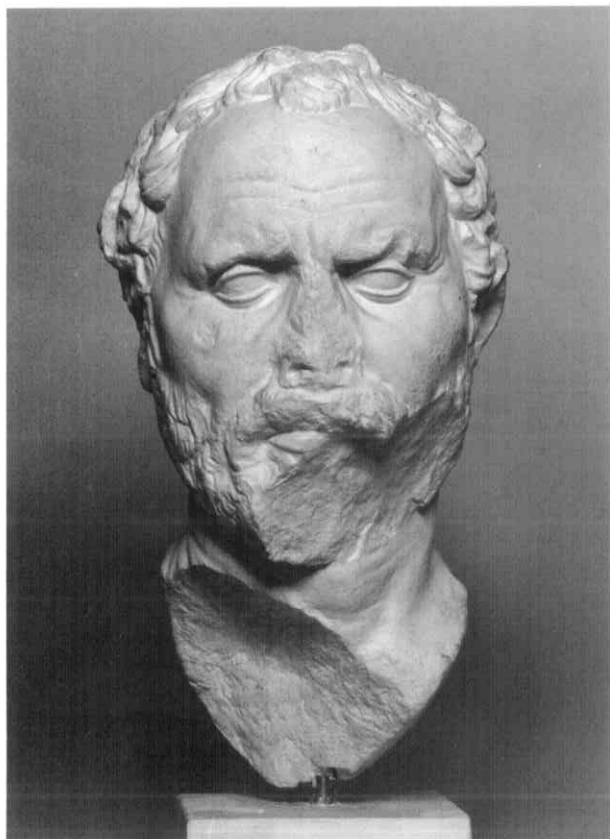
77. Head of Poseidippos. Geneva, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire inv. MF 1330, cast in Munich. Photo: Munich, Museum für Abgüsse Klassischer Bildwerke.

case of Demosthenes, the locks are also aligned almost horizontally from the back of the head toward the face. There are likewise noticeably ornamental motifs in the hairstyle. For example, the curls above the right ear are arranged in a series of claw motifs.

The similarity of the Demosthenes to the beardless portraits is made even clearer by examining the structure of the face. The treatment of Demosthenes' eye area is treated as a cleft between the top of the head and the face. The distinction between the cheek bone and the temples is present, as is the clear demarcation of the eyes. These formal devices allowed the sculptors to emphasize the anatomical features of the human head. If one visualizes the structure of a skull, the most important characteristic is the division of the enclosed mass of the cranium from the open network of the facial skeleton. It is exactly this clear division between the smooth curve of the cranium, over which the skin is stretched tightly, and the fleshy face, covered in complex wrinkles, that is characteristic of the portrait heads of the early Hellenistic period. This applies to the portraits of Menander, Poseidippos, and Demosthenes. This style of design can be seen most clearly on the impressive portrait of an unknown old man in the Museo Barracco in Rome (see Fig. 40).<sup>7</sup> Due to the old man's gaunt features, the contrast between the curving,

solid cranium and the loose, almost drooping facial features can be seen with particular clarity.

A comparison of these early Hellenistic heads to those of the later Hellenistic period is revealing. As an example let us look at a slightly larger-than-life portrait head in the Terme Museum in Rome (Fig. 79).<sup>8</sup> Due to typological similarities – similar hair length, similar full face – this portrait has been compared to the portrait of Poseidippos in the past. This comparison led to the conclusion that both heads should be dated to the middle of the first century B.C.E. But does the Terme portrait display any of the early Hellenistic characteristics noted above? Absolutely not. To begin, the separation between the cranium and the face and between the bony and fleshy areas of the head is not shown consistently. The zones in which the cheekbones curve and the temples meet is barely accentuated. Moreover, the eye area of the Terme head does not serve as a cleft between the face and the skull. The eyes neither lie deep in the sockets, nor are they clearly set apart from the cheek and brow ridges. Instead, the curves of the eyebrows, the folds of the eyelids, the eyeballs, and the infraorbital region form a more or less continual succession of curvatures and lines. Additionally, the curves of the brows are evenly rounded; they do not clearly mark the join between forehead and temples.



78. Head of Demosthenes. Rome, Musei Vaticani, cast in Munich. Photo: Munich, Museum für Abgüsse Klassischer Bildwerke.

Although the portrait of Poseidippos and that of the unknown man in Rome have similar hairstyles, they differ from each other in the actual arrangement and effect of the curls. Even from the front, we can see that the unknown man's hair does not help to emphasize the three-dimensional extension of the head. At the temples, the curls are twisted in such a way that they frame the face and do not allow the sides of the head to be seen. The portrait of Poseidippos, however, shows strands of hair underlying those curls at the temples. In profile it becomes clear that almost all of the curls on the head in the Terme Museum are twisted into crescent shapes and that they are arranged in large, regular rows. The curls, instead of cascading from the back of the head to the front, are arranged around the head like degrees of latitude. The Terme head gives the impression that the sculptor used a simple sphere as the model for his work, and it was onto this sphere's surface that he evenly distributed the various sensory organs and other head parts.

Not all portraits of the late Hellenistic period are as full-faced as the unknown man in the Terme Museum: There are, of course, examples of gaunt and bony faces from this time, but even these portraits differ distinctly from the early Hellenistic ones. As an example one may compare the portrait of the Stoic philosopher Poseidonius, which, given his life-

time (ca. 135–51/50 B.C.E.), must have been created in the first century B.C.E. (Fig. 80).<sup>9</sup> Although Poseidonius' face shows a series of anatomical features that are linked to the structure of the skull, the way in which they are displayed is clearly distinguishable from portraits of the earlier periods. The dents of the temples, for example, are not clefts between the voluminous forehead and the cheekbones, as they are on the portraits of Demosthenes or Menander. Instead, they extend from the ears to the high hairline, indicating a connection rather than a separation between the upper and the lower parts of the head. Likewise, the treatment of the eyes does not emphasize the clear horizontal axis of the face. Although the points at which the brow ridges meet the cheekbones are marked with scratched crow's-feet, there are no acute angles at these points. The bony structure of the skull is shown on the surface of Poseidonius' head, but there is no clear division between the considerable cranium and the face. In profile, it is clear that little interest was taken in the full three-dimensionality of the head; the extension of the back of the head behind the ears is almost completely lacking. Indeed, most of the head consists of the face, and all features are arranged to be seen from a frontal view. The forehead, for example, is not rounded in profile but forms a clear edge at the hairline. The curls at the temples are twisted forward to frame



79. Head of an unknown Roman. Rome, Museo Nazionale inv. 125501. Photo: Rossa, DAI Rome, negs. 75.1358-9.

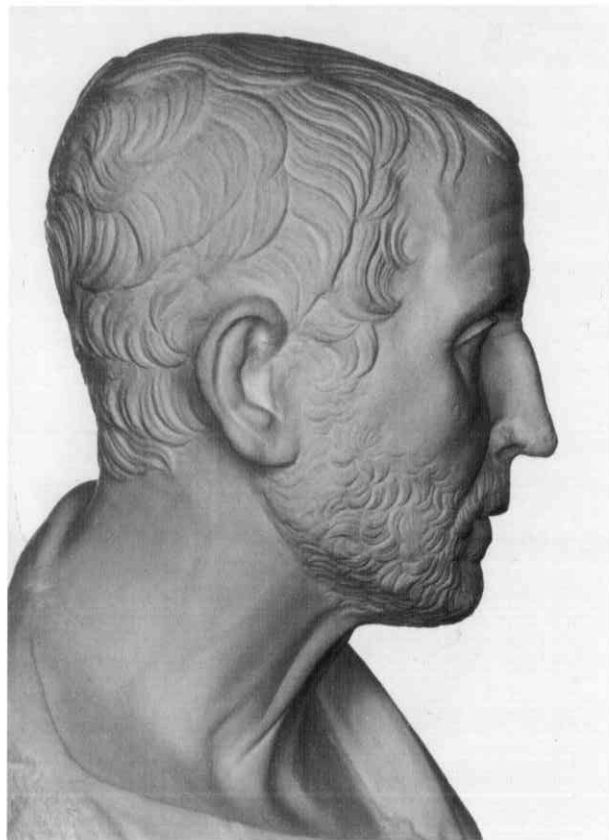
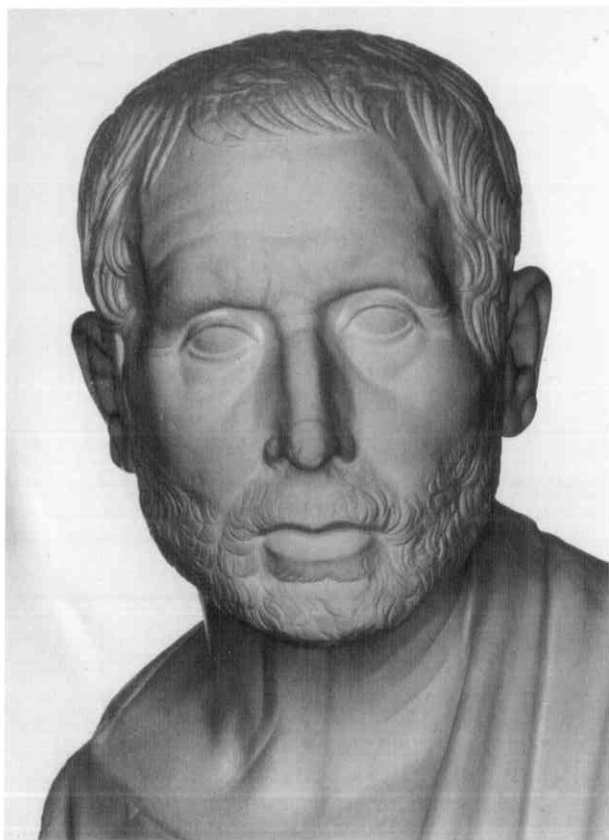
the face, as on the Terme portrait. Poseidonius' hairstyle too is similar to this portrait, with crescent-shaped curls arranged in large, regular areas.

In sum, there are three important distinguishing features of early Hellenistic portraits. First, there is a clear emphasis of the contrast between the bony, large cranium and the facial area, which is divided into small parts, and both are sometimes shown wrinkled or gaunt. Second, the eyes are clearly set apart from the lines and curvatures of the face and form the dominant horizontal axis of the face. Third, the hair is often arranged in flamelike curls that are designed as ornaments and point almost horizontally from the back of the head to the front of face. Consistently, both the shape of the head as a whole and the details of the early portraits emphasize and accentuate the extension and the volume of the head.

With these guidelines in mind, we can now start looking for other beardless portraits of the early Hellenistic period. As the case of Poseidippos shows, it is possible that there are several more famous Greeks without beards hiding among the many unnamed portraits that have previously been held to be of late Hellenistic or Roman Republican date. While working on his reconstructions of early Hellenistic statues of poets, Klaus Fittschen had already drawn attention to a head

in Copenhagen that he wanted to link to the seated statue of the so-called Pseudo-Menander (Fig. 81).<sup>10</sup> His arguments for dating the Copenhagen portrait to the third century B.C.E. were mainly typological. He refers to the coiled strands of hair, as well as the short, heavy chin, the small eyes, and the lower lip, which are similar to those on the portrait of Philetairos of Pergamon. In addition, several stylistic characteristics also speak in favor of a date in the early Hellenistic period. The eyes of the Copenhagen head, which are clearly set apart from the surrounding features, and the high curving, capacious cranium correspond to the characteristics that were noted above. (The eyes do lie deep in the sockets, although this characteristic is somewhat unclear because of the severe damage to the curves of the eyebrows.) The head in Copenhagen is probably the portrait of a beardless Greek from the third century B.C.E.

Another head that is likewise not of late Republican date is the beardless portrait in the Museo Torlonia in Rome (Fig. 82).<sup>11</sup> Here, all the aforementioned characteristics of the early Hellenistic portraits are clearly evinced. The axis through the eyes is heavily emphasized and forms the separation between the large cranium and the compact face. Although the long hair of the Museo Torlonia head is arranged in a more regular pattern than that on the Menander head, the almost



80. Bust of Poseidonius. Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale inv. 6142, cast in Göttingen, Archäologisches Institut. Photo: Stephan Eckardt.

horizontal alignment from the back of the head to the face is very similar.

So far it has not been possible to establish who these portraits in Copenhagen and Rome represent. If Fittschen's linking of the Copenhagen head to the statue in the Vatican is accurate, then this head should probably also be understood as the portrait of a poet. In the case of the head in the Museo Torlonia, the clues necessary for a reconstruction of the original connection are missing. The bust with a robe is a modern addition. Only the fact that the base of the neck slopes forward indicates that the statue was seated.

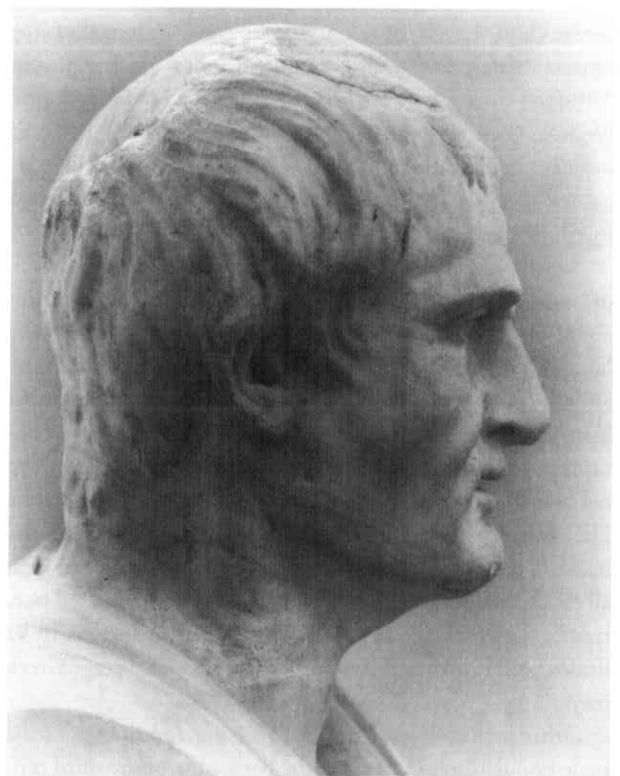
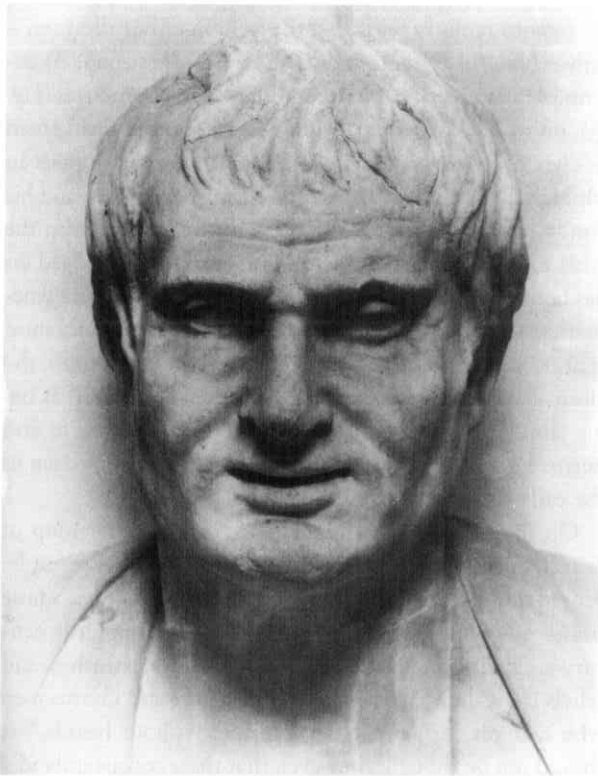
Even if the previous two examples are accepted, it is still generally rare for beardless portraits to be dated to the early Hellenistic period – even when clear criteria are met. Indeed, during my examination of preserved heads, apart from various doubtful cases, only the two beardless heads noted above were found that could be firmly placed in the early Hellenistic period. This conclusion leads to another important question: How can we explain the fact that, with the exception of Hellenistic rulers, so few portraits of third-century beardless Greeks survive? Does this beardlessness have a previously overlooked significance that might account for its rarity?

First of all, we must of course be conscious that our evidence is utterly dependant on Roman perspectives. All of the

portraits discussed above are Roman copies that owe their existence to Roman interest in the person portrayed. Menander is an exceptional instance: More than fifty replicas of his portrait exist, and there must have been thousands of them during the empire. This is very different from the case of the other surely identified poet, Poseidippos, of which there are only two known replicas. The Copenhagen and Torlonia Museum heads seem to be unique pieces. Looking at this lack of evidence, one might presume that the Romans found little of interest in the Greek writers of the post-Classical period. This would correspond to the classicistic attitude toward Greek culture that is reflected so famously in Pliny's dictum *cessavit deinde ars* for the period after the 121st Olympiad (296 B.C.E.).<sup>12</sup> The fact that this did not apply to all areas of Greek culture and to all Greek intellectuals, however, is proved by the many famous portraits of philosophers of the third century B.C.E., especially the Epicureans and the Stoics.<sup>13</sup> Was it, then, a particular group of writers that were almost ignored by the Romans? Is it significant that the only two portraits of beardless writers from the early third century B.C.E. worth mentioning are comic playwrights? Is this a coincidence, or might the fact that Menander and Poseidippos are beardless have something to do with their profession?



81. Bust of an unknown man. Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek inv. 2782. Photo: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen.



82. Bust of an unknown man. Rome, Museo Torlonia inv. 49. Photo: Felbermeyer, DAI Rome, negs. 35.71-2.



In modern academic literature, the shaving of the face is described as a general fashion that evolved during and after the reign of Alexander the Great. According to the *opinio communis*, Greek men followed the example of the Macedonian king and renounced the beards, which up to then had been the sign of an adult citizen. It was only the philosophers and a few traditionalists who continued to wear beards as an expression of their conservative convictions.<sup>14</sup> In this context, the portraits of Menander and Poseidippos are usually interpreted as typical examples of the new fashion.<sup>15</sup> This is how most Greeks at the beginning of the third century B.C.E. are said to have looked. This simple model should probably be questioned and complicated. Can Macedonian fashion *alone* account for changes in Greek portraiture at the end of the fourth century B.C.E.? And did fashion really change as abruptly as is presumed? After all, in the fifth century B.C.E. – even in the fourth – adult men without beards were the target of scathing ridicule and derogatory remarks.<sup>16</sup> Is it possible that this attitude was totally overturned during the rule of Alexander?

Let us first look at the sources that form the basis of our conjecture. The most important written evidence, passed down to us by Athenaios (13.565A–D), comes from Chrysippos, whose remarks date from the second half of the third century B.C.E. He states that the custom of shaving the beard became more and more fashionable under Alexander. For the attitude concerning shaving in the times before Alexander, he quotes authors of the fourth century B.C.E., who disparage clean-shaven men. Chrysippos also mentions that *laws against* shaving had been passed in Rhodes and Byzantion. Although these laws were no longer enforced in Chrysippos' lifetime, their existence demonstrates that shaving had had negative connotations. Clearly, people (and cities!) that regarded clean-shaven men as indecent must have taken a tough line against the new fashion.

Archaeological evidence also supports the idea that a lack of beard was originally meant to convey specific information about the person portrayed and that beardlessness only *later* became a general fashion. For the beardless portraits of Alexander's successors, the self-representation of the Macedonian king was decisive.<sup>17</sup> Alexander had already laid the foundations of his fame as a young prince. Once a king himself, he held on to this image of the successful, beardless son.<sup>18</sup> The Hellenistic rulers wanted to share Alexander's youthful dynamism and military glory by renouncing beards. Although all this is well known, it must be noted that these royal portraits cannot realistically allow any solid conclusions to be drawn about the beard style of the majority of average Greek men.

Other archaeological evidence for the appearance of the male population of Greece at the beginning of the third century B.C.E. is scarce and difficult to evaluate. There are various reasons for this. One is a simple matter of Greek artistic

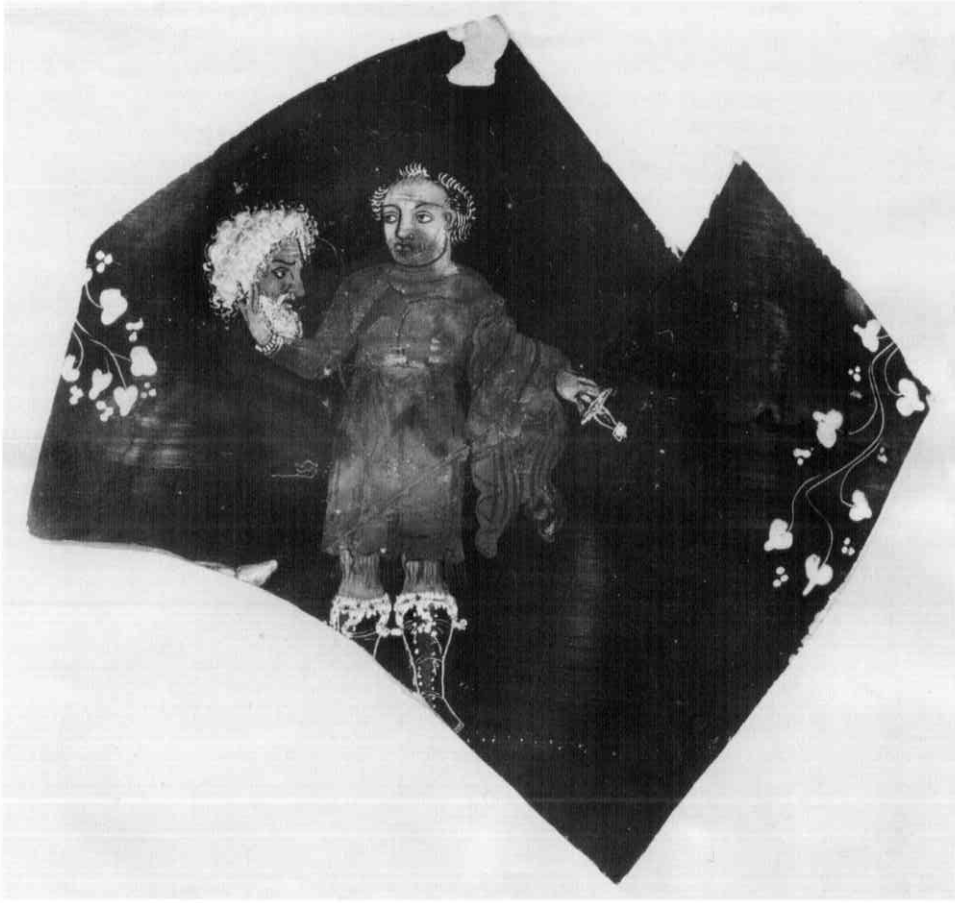
convention. Though men without beards were often depicted even in the pre-Hellenistic period, in almost every case beardlessness was meant to indicate the youthful status of the person portrayed, whether as a young athlete, a warrior, or even as a hero. Men up to the age of about thirty were characterized by the lack of a beard. These were men who had not yet taken over the position of the head of the *oikos* from their father and had therefore not yet taken on the role of a full citizen. The representation of the beard thus reflected social position, not biological age. The presence or absence of the beard in any given image of the fifth and fourth century B.C.E. had very little to do with the actual growth of facial hair.<sup>19</sup> It is difficult to differentiate between this traditional signifier for social position and faces that actually were clean-shaven. Such cases can be proved only when a lack of beard is shown in connection with typical civic representations – for example, if the beardless man is a father depicted opposite his adult son or as the worshiping head of the family on a votive relief.

A further difficulty in making statements about Greek beard fashion of the early third century B.C.E. is the lack of relevant monuments. Few tombstones or votive reliefs in which the Greeks represent themselves in their civic roles survive from the period. The dense series of Attic tomb reliefs breaks before 300 B.C.E. without showing a beardless male face that is not meant to represent a youth. In the second half of the third century and the beginning of the second century B.C.E. – the same period in which Chrysippos made his famous remarks regarding the fashion of beardlessness – only a handful of monuments show beardless men. As examples I mention a painted tomb *stele* from Demetrias (Fig. 83), on which both the standing soldier and the sitting man in civic dress are beardless, and the famous votive relief in Munich, which shows an elderly, clean-shaven man and his family making a sacrifice.<sup>20</sup> The dark decades between the Attic tomb reliefs and these examples cannot be bridged (as has been suggested) by the votive statues from Cypriot sanctuaries.<sup>21</sup> The few faces with signs of age from the early third century B.C.E. still have a short beard.<sup>22</sup> In comparison, the clean-shaven men from this period are characterized as being youthful in the traditional way. It is not possible to find positive evidence that beardlessness was a *general fashion* in the early third century B.C.E.

On the other hand, the existence of a special group of beardless men, in addition to the Hellenistic rulers, can be proved for this period. This group is made up of *actors*, whose beardlessness can be traced continuously from the fifth century B.C.E. into the Hellenistic age. In all vase paintings and reliefs from the Classical period, the actors and chorus men who take off their masks are depicted without beards.<sup>23</sup> It should not be thought, however, that these consistently idealized and youthful faces do not raise problems for interpretation. Should we rather draw the conclusion that all of these



83. Painted grave *stèle* from Demetrias. Volos, Archaiologiko Mouseio. Photo: Peter Schultz.

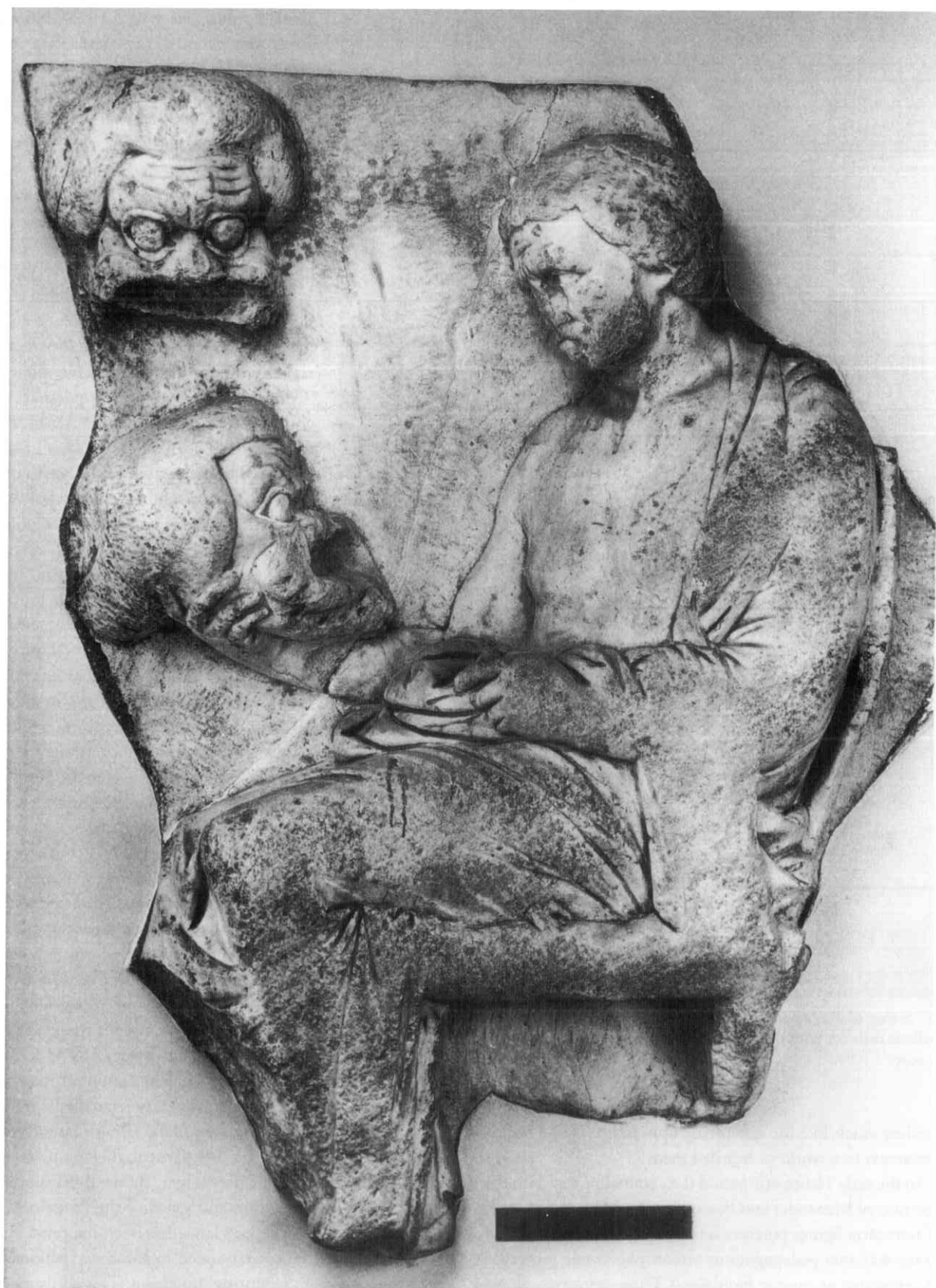


84. Fragment of an Apulian bell krater. Würzburg, Martin-von-Wagner-Museum der Universität Würzburg inv. H 4600. Photo: K. Öhrlein, neg. PF 018.

actors were young men who did not yet have a beard? A misunderstanding like this would overlook the artistic conventions of the period, in which a detailed characterization of very specific ages had yet to be developed; if one were to imagine, for example, the portrait of Perikles or bearded men from Attic tomb reliefs as clean-shaven, their faces would be indistinguishable from those of younger men. Taken together with very sparse indications from literary sources, the most likely interpretation for the significant lack of beards in pre-Hellenistic depictions of actors is that they did not wear beards in reality.<sup>24</sup> This particular practice could be caused by the uncomfortable whole-head masks worn by actors on the stage. The only exception from the rule that actors were depicted beardless in the fourth century B.C.E. – the much-debated Pronomos vase in Naples – raises more problems than it solves.<sup>25</sup> Beside the beardless actors of the satyr chorus, the three protagonists are bearded. Indeed, it has been observed that the actor playing Herakles resembles the mask he carries in his hand. The actors' assimilation, to varying degrees, with their respective roles of Herakles, the king, or Silenos may be the reason why they are shown bearded in this singular case. Alternatively, as Richard Green recently

suggested, the protagonists' uncustomary beards may be a sign for their nonprofessionalism and an indication of the special character of this performance.<sup>26</sup> This exceptional depiction does not, however, weaken the rule that actors were portrayed beardless in the Classical period, and the artistic convention to avoid detailed signs of age makes it difficult to decide whether the other actors here were being presented as clean-shaven or merely youthful.

As different age groups become more distinct over the course of the fourth century, we begin to find examples that seem to demonstrate that actors really were clean-shaven. The actor on a famous fragment in Würzburg (Fig. 84) has a high hairline that clearly characterizes his advanced age.<sup>27</sup> His untidy-looking stubble could only have been caused by shaving, even if this had obviously been done some time before. One can imagine how conspicuous the appearance of the actors must have been in an environment of bearded men in the time before Alexander the Great. An additional hint at their exceptional status could be the grave of the fourth-century actor Makareus at the Athenian Kerameikos.<sup>28</sup> The furnishing of this male burial with *female* pyxides, mirror, and makeup may indicate a transgression of gender-specific



85. Attic grave relief. Lyme Park. Photo: Forschungsarchiv für Antike Plastik, Archäologisches Institut, Universität zu Köln, neg. 2078/o.



86. Statue of Poseidippos (cf. Fig. 102). Rome, Musei Vaticani, Galleria delle statue 271 inv. 735. Photo: Faraglia, DAI Rome, neg. 41.1035.

borders much like the effeminate appearance of the beardless actors in a world of bearded men.

In the early Hellenistic period (i.e., contemporary with the portraits of Menander and Poseidippos), an important series of terracotta figures portrays actors as a generic type, similar to the way that pedagogues or philosophers were portrayed in terracotta or bronze figurines.<sup>29</sup> These terracotta actors show faces that – without exception – are clean-shaven but by no means youthful.<sup>30</sup> They are the best evidence for the

defined public image of the beardless actors in this period at the latest.

All this leads us back to the interpretation of the portraits of Menander and Poseidippos. Since both were comic playwrights (i.e., authors who were closely connected to the theater), it does not seem unreasonable to suspect that their clean-shaven faces may have *something* to do with the traditional appearance of the actors.<sup>31</sup>

Though there is no solid proof that representations of playwrights must be connected to representations of actors, some circumstantial evidence can be mentioned. To begin, the first beardless portraits of comic playwrights coincide with far-reaching changes that took place in the early Hellenistic theater. In the late fourth and early third centuries, men who were involved in theatrical performances joined together to form guilds. Actors, choral dancers, costumers, prop managers, and, what is key here, playwrights all belonged to these associations of Dionysian *technites*.<sup>32</sup> Actors also became the most prominent representatives of the theater at this time, as Aristotle's *Rhetorica* (1403b31–5) and other sources demonstrate.<sup>33</sup> It is hardly outrageous to suggest that playwrights adapted themselves to the customs of actors in order to make their affiliation with these associations clear.

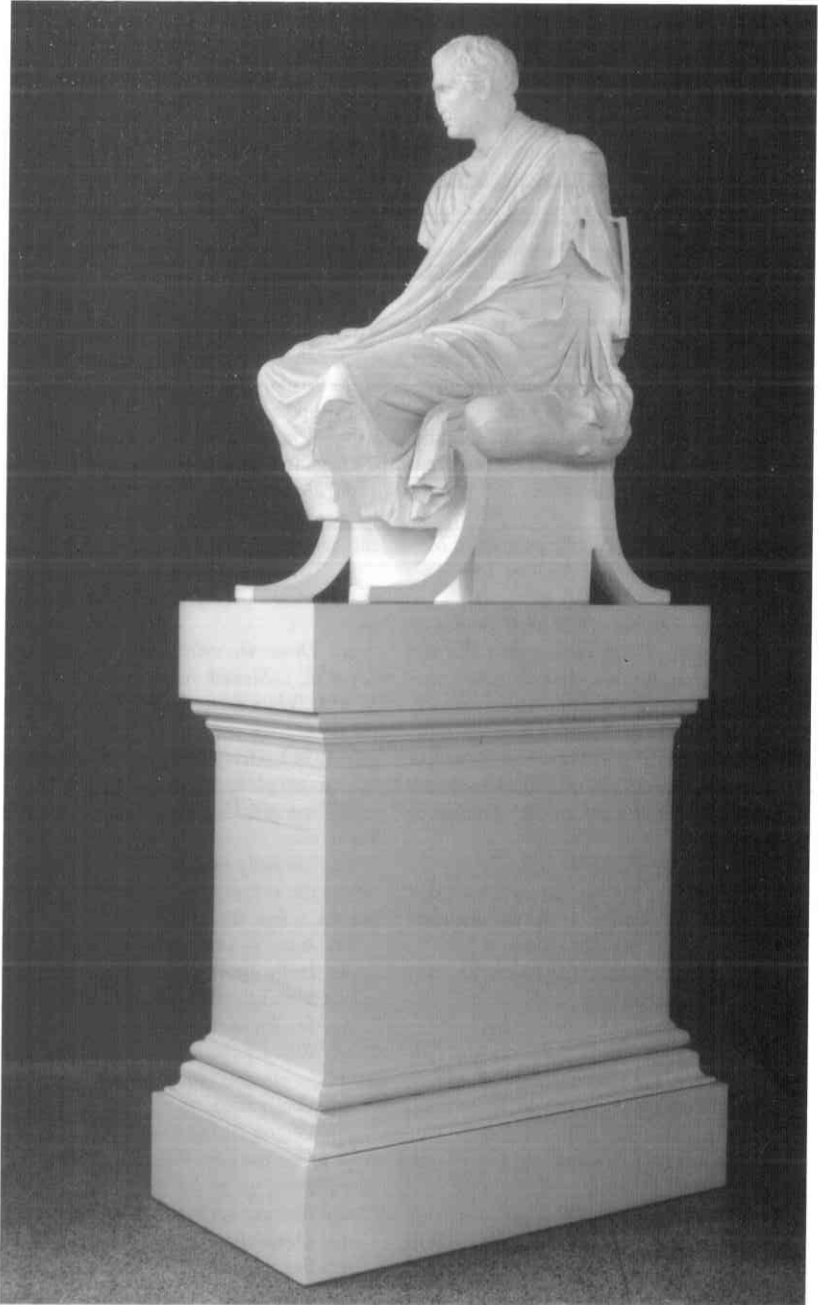
The Attic grave relief of a comic playwright in Lyme Park (Fig. 85) supports this hypothesis.<sup>34</sup> Originally erected in the middle of the fourth century B.C.E., the head of the man portrayed was reworked at the beginning of the third century B.C.E.

The bearded face of the playwright became, for the most part, beardless. Only on the cheeks is there an indication of stubble, and it is very similar to that seen on the fragment in Würzburg. The reason for this very unusual adjustment to an Attic funerary relief might reflect a change of fashion and meaning. In the family's burial *temenos*, this relief paid homage to a particularly famous member of the family, a comic playwright. By the third century, however, the representation and status of the deceased was no longer clear to his descendants. In effect, the reworking of the old memorial corresponded to the new, fashionable characterization of the writing profession. This adjustment, however, was only considered necessary because the relief portrayed the deceased specifically in his professional guise.

Another relief from the same precinct showed the poet Epigenes the Athenian in a traditional setting with his family, and *his* beard remained untouched.<sup>35</sup>

Finally, the general statue type of the Menander and Poseidippos also evidences the intent to characterize the playwrights as such. Both poets sit in high-backed chairs, the so-called *klismoi*, the seats of which are padded with noticeably large cushions (Figs. 86, 87). Such comfort was quite unusual for this kind of furniture. Although *diphroi*, the stools without backrests, are often fitted with cushions on Attic tomb reliefs, this is rarely the case for *klismoi*. Cushions were, however, particularly important for sitting for long durations in the theater, as is attested by Theophrastos.<sup>36</sup> It was necessary that the seats of the *prohedria* had them. These rows of the auditorium were furnished either with wooden *klismoi* or with marble reproductions of such chairs as those in the Theater of Dionysos in Athens.<sup>37</sup> It would not be unusual for playwrights to sit in these seats during the performance of their plays, especially since epigraphical evidence demonstrates that poets like Philippides in Athens, as well as other actors, were granted the formal right to sit in the front rows.<sup>38</sup> Both their visible presence in the theater and the honors of the polis for their achievements seems to have caused the choice of this statue type as appropriate representation for playwrights. Their regular portrayal on cushioned *klismoi* can probably be understood as an indication of their place in the theater. In addition to Menander and Poseidippos, the playwright Moschion was portrayed in this way.<sup>39</sup> A third-century terracotta figure of this type from Olympia always has been interpreted as being of a playwright.<sup>40</sup> The only provable exception to the rule that a seating arrangement like this was connected specifically to dramatists is the statue of the Epicurean Metrodoros.<sup>41</sup>

The result of these observations is different from the previous interpretations of the Menander statue. Paul Zanker, for example, interpreted the same characteristics – the lack of beard and the padded chair – as signs of a luxurious lifestyle and the domestic ambience that was necessary for the poet's inspiration. For Zanker, the official raising of a statue like this was proof of a new emphasis on private life. Instead of the politically active citizen, it was the elegant man who



87. Statue of Menander, reconstruction by Klaus Fittschen. Göttingen, Archäologisches Institut. Photo: Stephan Eckardt.

kept out of public affairs and who knew how to enjoy life that is honored.<sup>42</sup> It seems equally possible, however, that it is Menander's particular *profession* that is being emphasized. Erected in the Theater of Dionysos, right next to the seats of the *prohedria*, the portrait statue was intended to immortalize his public role as a playwright. The same probably also applies to the statue of Poseidippos.

There is little doubt that Zanker correctly demonstrated the rejection of the standard civic image in the early Hellenistic portraits of literati.<sup>43</sup> Even in the 330s, the statue

of Sophokles in the Theater of Dionysos showed the dramatist as an exemplary citizen, *not* as a writer. The fourth-century ideal of the active citizen determined the characteristics of the representation far more strongly than did the particular abilities and achievements of the man portrayed. What replaced this ideal at the very end of the fourth and beginning of the third century, however, was not praise of *apragmosyne* – the life in seclusion – at least not in the case

of Menander.<sup>44</sup> Instead, it was praise of an individual's profession. Just as the philosophers of the period can immediately be recognized as a group due to the similar characteristics of their portraits, so too can playwrights or politicians.<sup>45</sup> In this way the portraits of the early Hellenistic period generally reflect a development from the more or less fictional community of equal citizens into a society that was increasingly organized and segregated into its constituent associations.

## NOTES

I would like to thank the editors for inviting me to participate in this volume. I would also like to thank Peter Schultz in particular for his careful reading of my paper. The present text owes much to his efforts.

1. Studniczka 1918. For the portrait of Menander see Fittschen 1991; Andrae 2001, 68–70; Kunze 2002, 69–72, 246–9.
2. See, e.g., Lippold 1918, 1–18; Crome 1935; Carpenter 1941, 96–101; Hafner 1983. For the problem of identification, see Pollitt 1986, 77–8; Ridgway 1990, 126–7.
3. Fittschen 1992b; Andrae 2001, 82–3.
4. Chamay and Maier 1989, 3 no. 1; see also the instructive comparison by Poulsen (1942, 104–5) between this head and the portrait of Menander.
5. Fittschen 1992b, 246.
6. Zanker 1995d, 83–9; see also von den Hoff and Schultz (Chapter 1) and von den Hoff (Chapter 4) in the present volume.
7. Fittschen 1988b, pl. 121.1, 2; von den Hoff 1994, 174–83 figs. 216–219.
8. Sorrenti 1987.
9. Richter (rev. Smith) 1984, 189–91; Fittschen 1988b, pl. 153; Andrae 2001, pl. 196.
10. Fittschen 1992b, 254–8; Johansen 1994, 46–7 no. 11.
11. Visconti 1884, 33–4 no. 49.
12. Plin. *HN* 34.52.
13. von den Hoff 1994.
14. *RE* 3 (1899) 30–4 s.v. Bart (A. Mau); Fittschen 1988a, 25; Hahn 1989, 33–45; Zanker 1995d, 108–9.
15. See, e.g., Smith 1991, 39.
16. See, e.g., Ar. *Thesm.* 130–45, 217–35; *Eccl.* 65–9; Ath. 6.260e; even the beardless *betairoi* of the Macedonian king Philip were mocked by Theopompus: Ath. 13.565bc. See also Stewart 1993, 74–5.
17. Smith 1991, 21–4.
18. Hölscher 1971, 25–31; Stewart 1993, 74–5; see also von den Hoff, Chapter 4 in the present volume.
19. For the meaning of different styles of beard in Classical art, see Wannagat 2001, 54–63.
20. *Demetrias stele*: Arvanitopoulou 1928, 143–6 pl. 1. *Munich relief*: Lullies 1979, 135–6 pl. 278; Pollitt 1986, 197 fig. 210; Smith 1991, 186 fig. 214; see also the votive relief for Kydreneus in Leiden: Bastet and Brunsting 1982, 120 no. 219 pl. 61.
21. von den Hoff 1994, 44; Zanker 1995d, 363 n. 18.
22. Connelly 1988, 56–7 no. 16 figs. 70–71; 69–70 no. 23 figs. 92–93; 88 no. 31 fig. 116; and 101 no. 53 figs. 165–166.
23. *Actors in vase paintings*: Winkler 1990, 43–6; Taplin 1993, 92–3; Green 2002. *Other media*: Himmelmann 1994, 146–9; Scholl 1995.
24. See Taplin 1993, 66 n. 26.
25. Winkler 1990, 43–5; Taplin 1993, 44 n. 35; Himmelmann 1994, 143–7.
26. Green 2002, 95.
27. Ghiron-Bistagne 1976, 106; Taplin 1993, 92–3 fig. 22.118; *CVA Würzburg* 4 (1999) pl. 51; Green 2002, 95, 99 fig. 16.
28. Kovacovics 1990, 29–31, 36–8.
29. Himmelmann 1983, 31–9.
30. See also a wall painting from Herculaneum, which is supposedly copying a Greek painting of the fourth or third century B.C.E.: Robertson 1975, 582 fig. 183a; Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli 1986, 39, 138 no. 103.
31. It is not only the portraits' beardlessness that gives rise to this conjecture. The facial expression in the portrayals of both the poets and actors is also very similar: Both look a little bit pained. This is caused by the slightly pursed lips and the knitting of their brows. See Himmelmann 1983, 34–5.
32. Pickard-Cambridge 1968, 279–305; Csapo and Slater 1995, 239–55; Lightfoot 2002; Aneziri 2003.
33. See Csapo and Slater 1995, 223–4.
34. Fittschen 1990; Himmelmann 1992; Scholl 1995.
35. See Scholl 1995, 223–9.
36. Theophr. *Char.* 2.11; see also Aischin. *In Ctes.* 3.76, quoted by Csapo and Slater 1995, 301 no. 159.
37. Maass 1972. For wooden examples, see Csapo and Slater 1995, 64–5 no. 131 pl. 4B.
38. For Philippides see *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 657; for actors see Csapo and Slater 1995, 242–3 nos. 37, 38.
39. Richter (rev. Smith) 1984, 169 fig. 130; Fittschen 1991, 263 n. 70 figs. 56.2, 62.4; Zanker 1995d, 143; the lack of a backrest does not indicate a *diphros* as the seat of this statue. The sweeping legs connect it, however, with the *klismoi*.
40. Bartels 1967, 256–62 fig. 95 pls. 120–121; Himmelmann 1983, 44–5 pl. 30; Zanker 1995d, 141 fig. 77.
41. von den Hoff 1994, 63–9.
42. Zanker 1995d, 79–83, 142–3.
43. *Ibid.*, 78, 89.
44. See Carter 1986.
45. See von den Hoff 1994, 191–2.